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(54) **INTEGRATED AIRCRAFT GALLEY SYSTEM**

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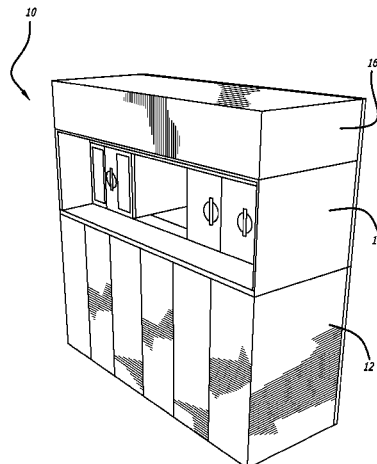
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
None
See application file for complete search history.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An integrated aircraft galley structure includes a service mod-
ule having a plurality of galley inserts including at least one
oven and at least one refrigeration unit. The service module is
formed with a plurality of bays sized to receive the plurality of
galley inserts, along with a human machine interface for
controlling all of the galley inserts. The service module fur-
ther includes a plurality of galley insert modules for control-
ling each galley insert, and an insert power and control unit
for each galley insert for controlling power to said insert. The
entire system is controlled by a galley power and control unit
for controlling each of the insert galley power and control
units, and an AC distribution unit for distributing power to the
insert power and control units.

8 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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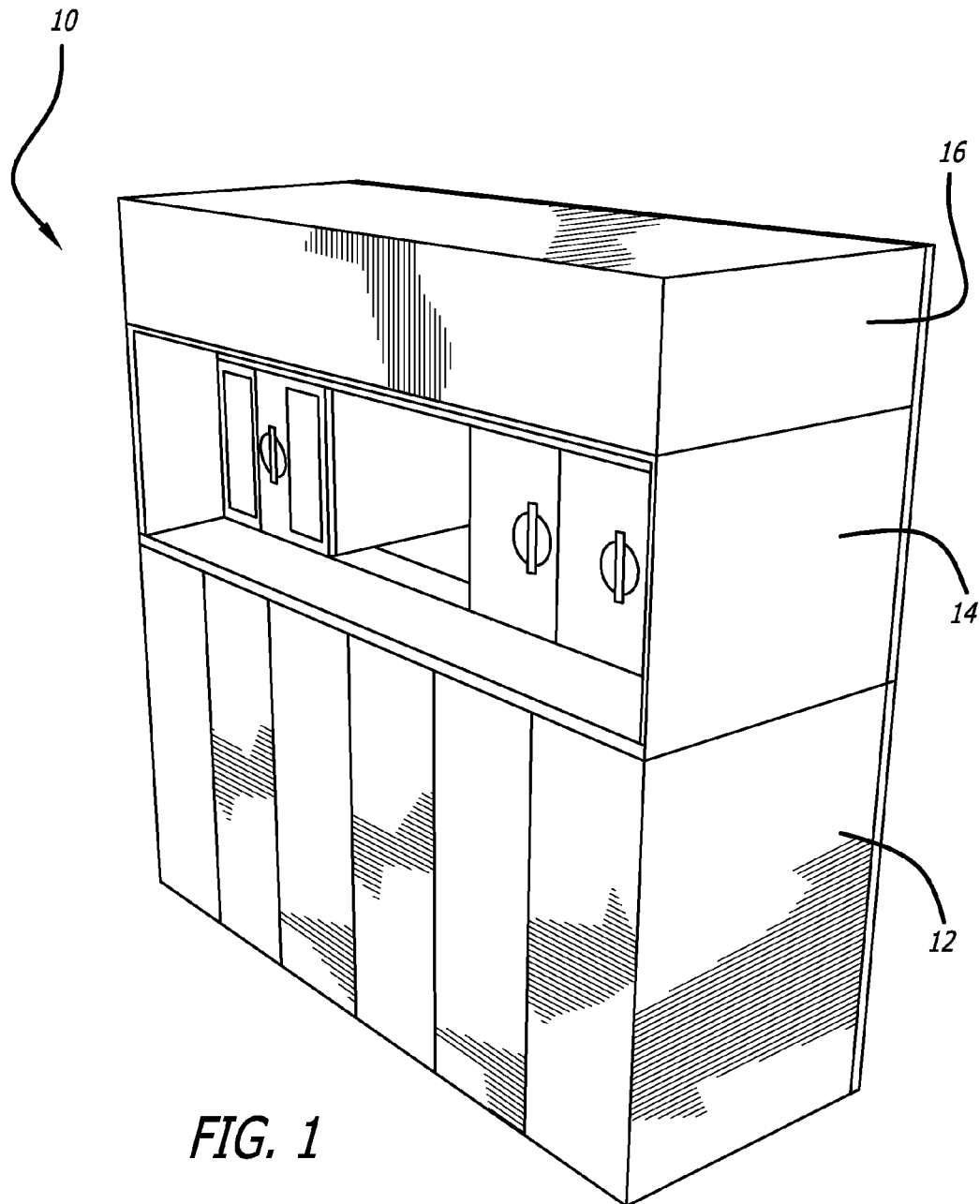
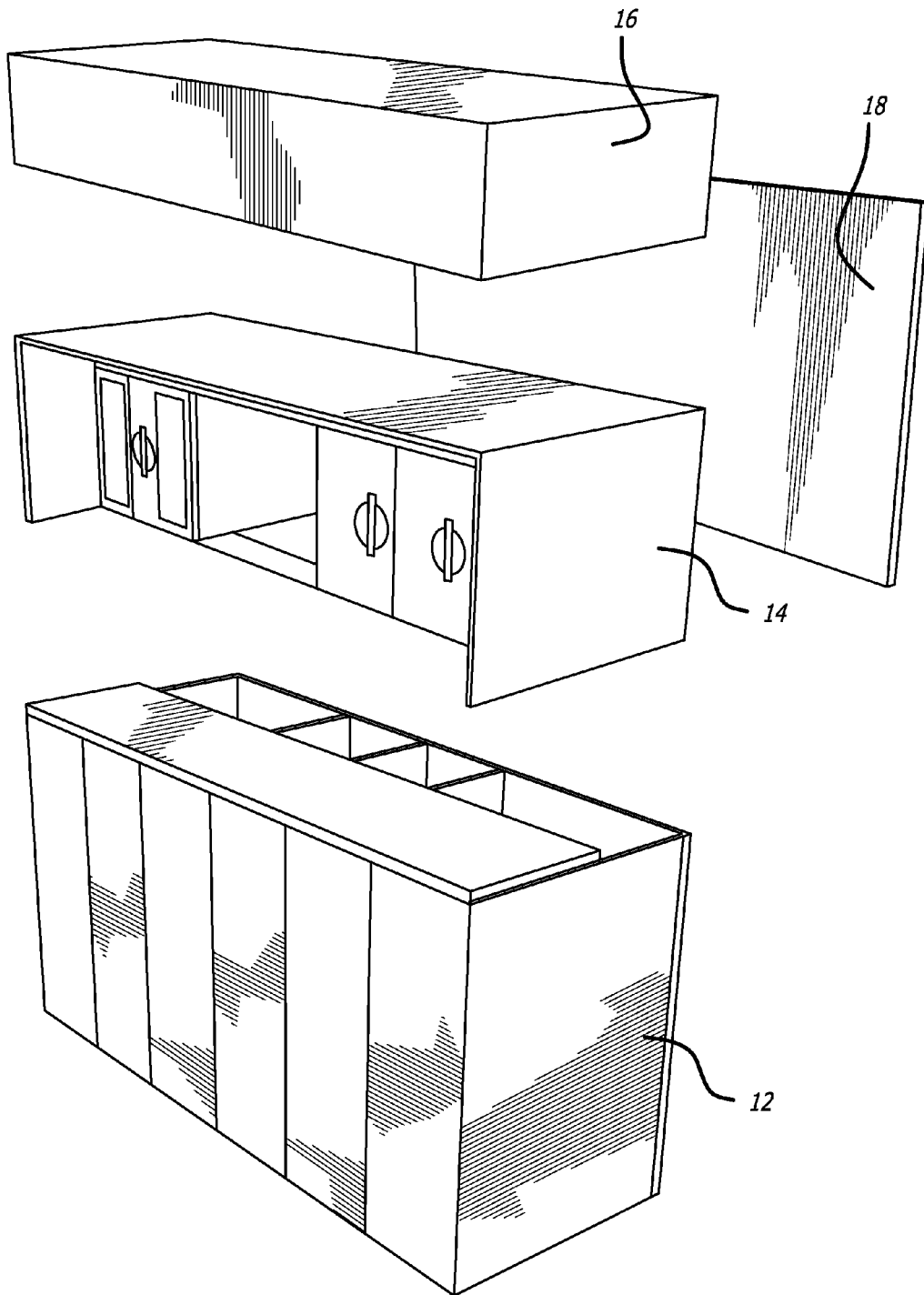


FIG. 1

FIG. 2



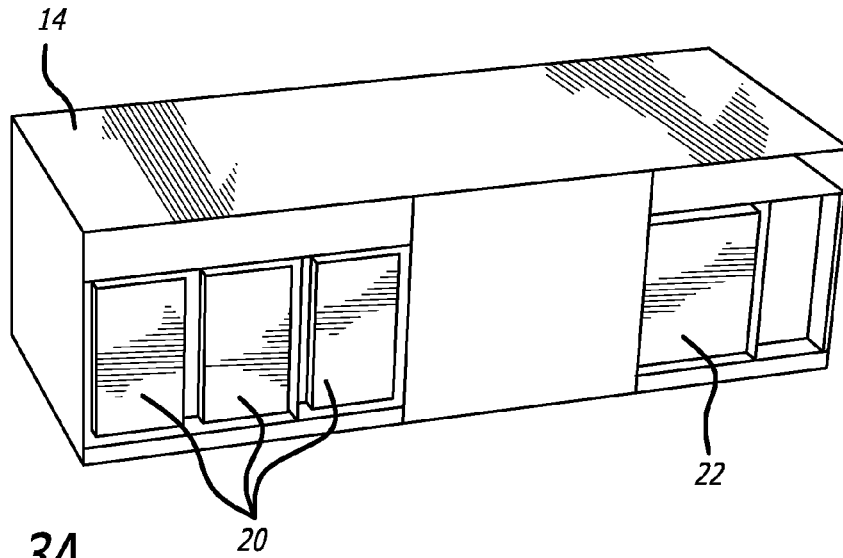


FIG. 3A

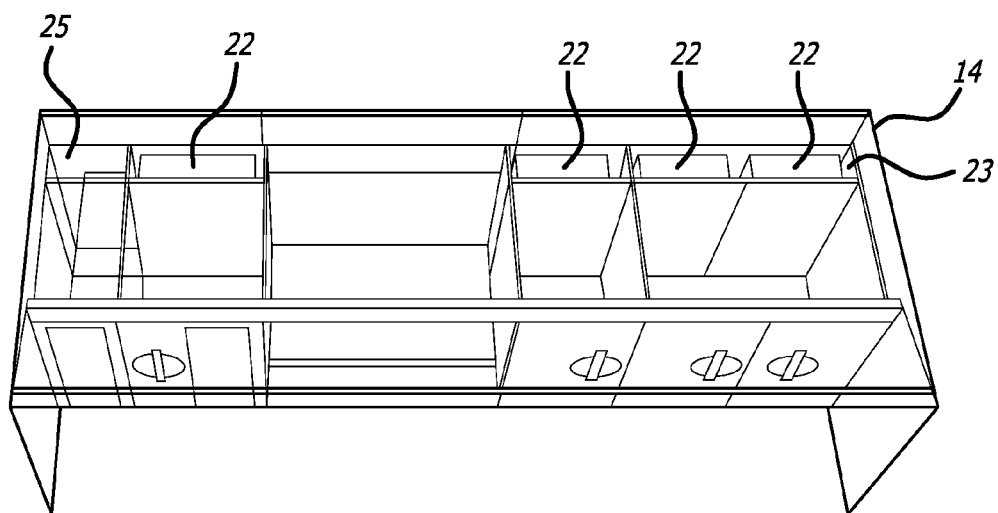
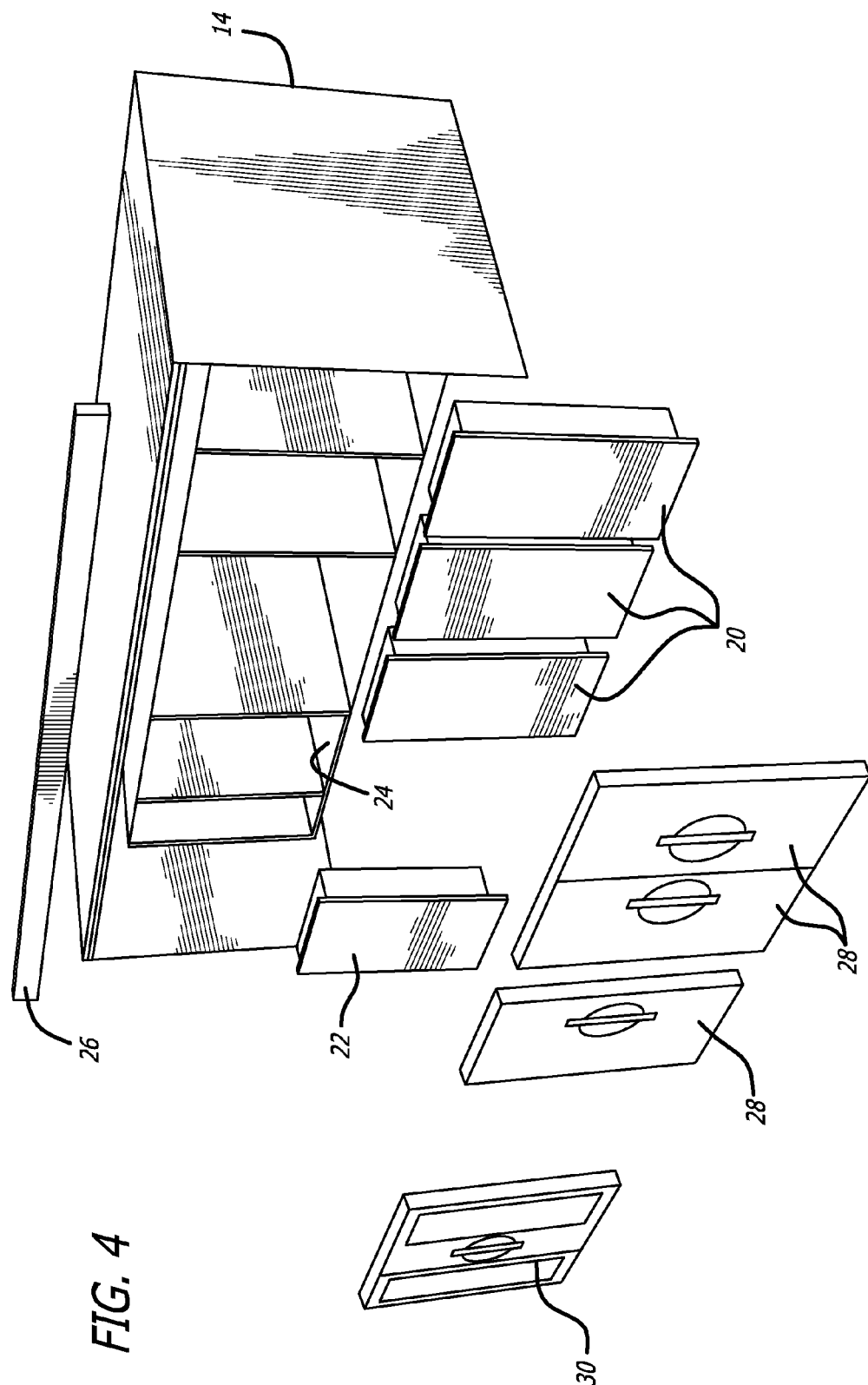


FIG. 3B



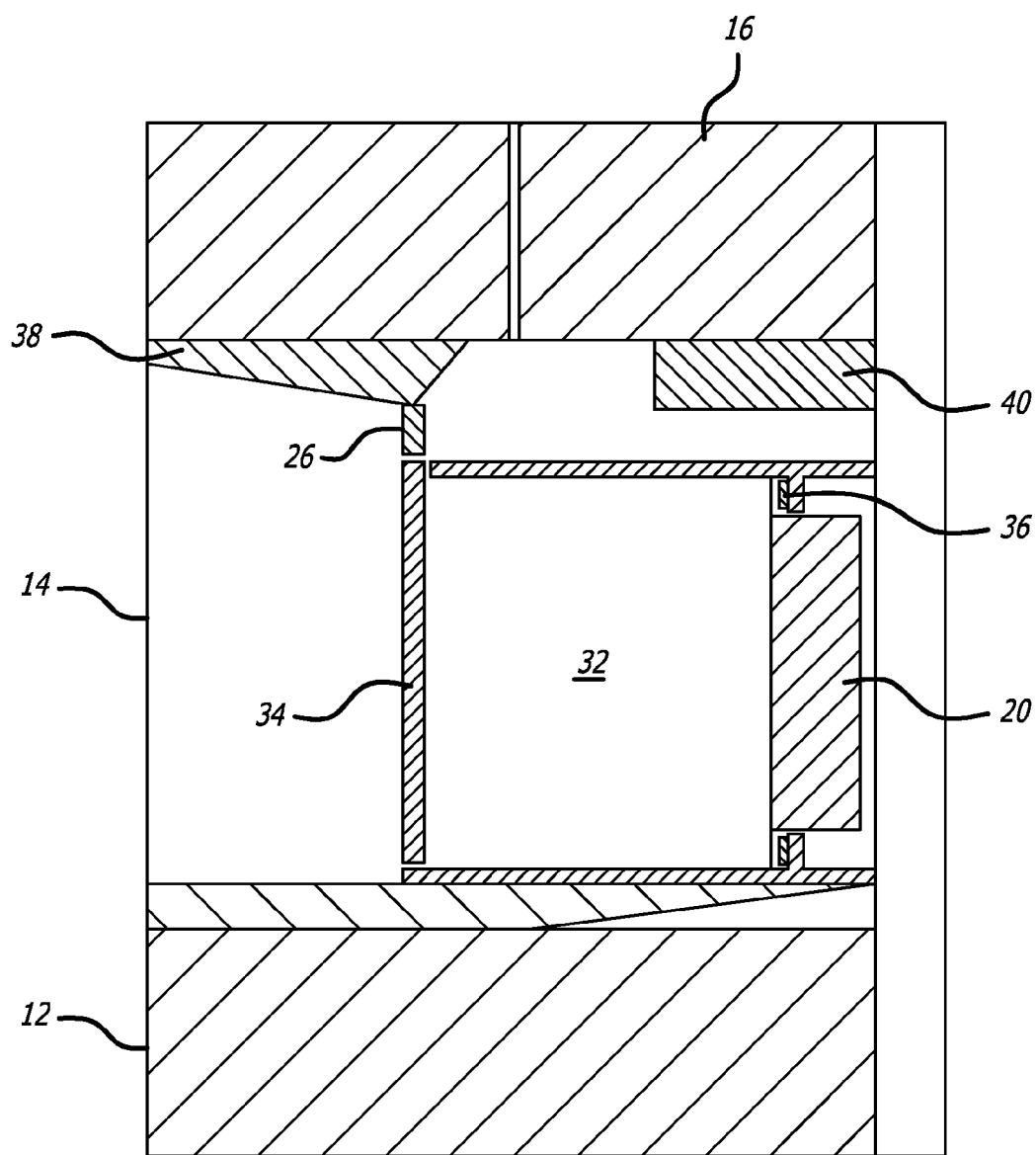


FIG. 5

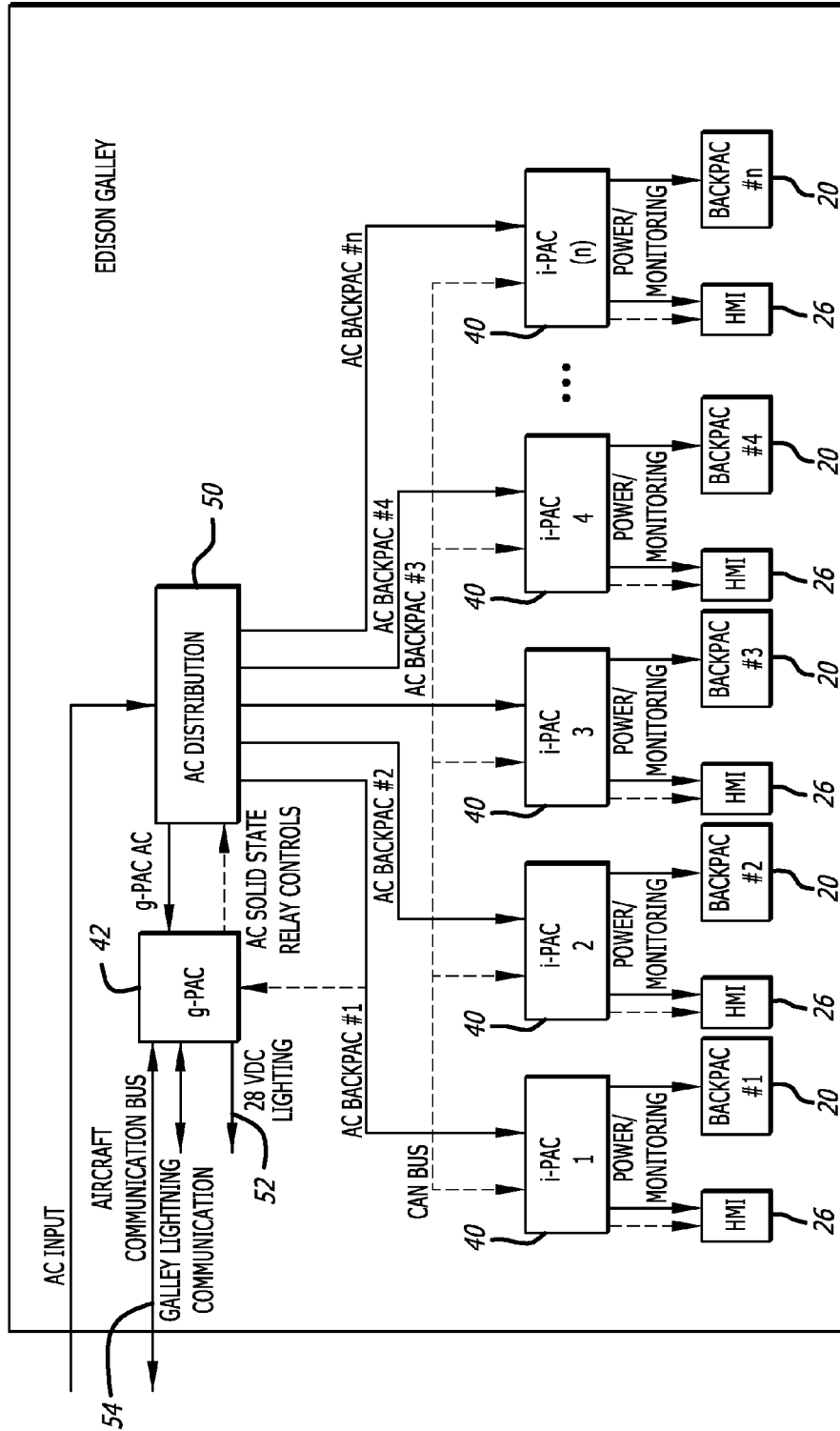


FIG. 6

INTEGRATED AIRCRAFT GALLEY SYSTEM

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation based on U.S. Ser. No. 14/207,106, filed on Mar. 12, 2014, which claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/798,674, filed Mar. 15, 2013, the content of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

The “galley” of a commercial aircraft refers to the structure that is used by the flight attendants to prepare food and beverages for the passengers. Due to constraints with space and weight, these structures are very ordered and efficient in all aspects of their construction and arrangement. One important consideration in the design of the galley is arrangement of the various equipment, or “inserts,” that make up the galley. Inserts can be any power consumer such as a coffee brewer, an oven, a trash compactor, refrigerator, or any other electrical appliance that can be found in the galley area. Traditionally, the galley of the aircraft is configured to meet the requirements of the aircraft, and then the inserts are incorporated into the galley as space and power availability permit. This can lead to inefficient use of space and weight as the inserts are placed in the galley, often with less than satisfactory results. Moreover, inserts placed in the galley after the galley has been installed in the plane often lead to challenging installations and modifications to the galley.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a new concept for an aircraft galley whereby the components, or inserts, for the galley as well as insert locations are fully integrated with the structure or frame to operate as a single, efficient system. That is, the various components are designed into the galley architecture prior to installation of the galley into the aircraft. This leads to a galley that is more intelligently arranged and lighter than traditional galleys, with greater space efficiency due to the elimination of redundant walls, structure, and air gaps found in conventional galleys. Moreover, the present invention leads to simplified command and control over the various components, and results in better configurability and modularity. In addition, operations such as power distribution can be more effectively controlled by the use of the present invention.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the operation of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an elevated, perspective view of a galley of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an elevated, exploded view of the galley of FIG. 1 with a galley cooling system;

FIG. 3a is an elevated, perspective rear view of the oven and refrigerator modules of the service module;

FIG. 3b is an overhead view, partially in phantom, of the service module showing the slots for the insert modules;

FIG. 4 is an exploded perspective view of the service module and oven/refrigerator modules;

FIG. 5 is a cross sectional view of the service module at an oven bay; and

FIG. 6 is a block diagram of a power distribution center for the galley.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 illustrates an aircraft galley 10 that incorporates the concepts of the present invention. The galley 10 depicted in the illustration has three main divisions: the bottom portion is a storage area 12 that includes storage for, among other things, serving carts that are used by flight attendants to service the passengers; the middle portion is the food and beverage service module 14 where many of the appliances are housed, such as ovens, refrigerators, coffee makers, overhead lighting, and the like; and the top portion is additional storage cabinets 16 for the galley, as well as equipment responsible for power and microprocessor control over the various galley inserts, or “GAINs.” As shown in FIG. 2, the galley 10 may also include a fourth component, namely a cooling panel and system 18 that may include vents and heat shields to prevent heat from impacting surrounding equipment adjacent the service module. The service module 14 of traditional galleys is typically where individual appliances of the galley are stored, albeit as stand-alone devices. Here, as will be explained below, the various inserts in the galley 10 of the present invention are designed so as to be incorporated directly into the service module 14 for optimum efficiency.

FIGS. 3a and 3b illustrate a rear view of the service module 14 where a new modular concept in galley architecture is demonstrated. The service module 14 includes three oven modules 20, as well as a refrigerator module 22, that are formed as part of the service module frame. These oven modules 20 can either be insertable into designated slots 23, 25 formed directly into the frame of the service module 14, or alternatively the modules can be permanently incorporated into the service module frame at the rear of the bay. Thermal insulation, air seals, inner liners, and drip trays can also be designed into the service module 14 rather than trying to create space for these elements after assembly. Similarly, the refrigerator module 22 can include heat exchange components with venting or other needs designed into the service module frame to optimize the available space.

FIG. 4 illustrates an exploded front view of the service module showing the oven modules 20 and refrigerator modules 22 at specially designed bays 24 optimized for this specific purpose. The oven modules 20 and the refrigerator module 22 work seamlessly with a human machine interface (HMI) 26 that is designed for each the oven and refrigerator components. The HMI, or smartbar, can be used to control the operation of all of the various galley inserts, lighting, etc. in the galley 10 with touch screen controls and/or displays for easy operation of the equipment. The smartbar 26 is preferably located on the upper front edge of the service module 14 so as to be in easy reach and operation by flight attendants. The smartbar 26 is connected to the various powered components by a bus (not shown) so that each component can be individually controlled by the flight attendant via the smart bar 26. By integrating all of the elements into the service module 14, the control of the ovens and refrigerators, as well as lighting, brewing equipment, and other electrical apparatus are controlled conveniently from a single location. Each oven module 22 is enclosed by oven doors 28, while the refrigerator module 22 is covered by the refrigerator doors 30.

The service module 14 is formed with pre-molded oven and refrigerator bays 24 that are specifically designed and

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sized for each oven or refrigerator unit to be used on the aircraft, and also include in the design the necessary channels, conduits, cabling, and the like for electronics, venting, cooling, etc. Each bay **24** is formed to minimize wasted space, using common walls to create the necessary enclosures while eliminating excess weight. FIG. **5** illustrates a cross-sectional view of the service module **14**, including an oven module **20** in the oven bay **32**. The oven bay **32** is defined by thermally insulated enclosure walls **34**, and the oven module **20** includes a thermal seal **36** at the rear of the wall to prevent heat from escaping through the back of the service module. The smartbar **26** is seated on top of the bay **32**, and there are venting channels **38** formed in the service module for carrying away heat generated by the oven. An integrated power and control unit **40** is located at the back of the service module bay to control the power distribution of the galley, as set forth below.

It can be seen that there is very little wasted space due to the specially designed bay that is designed to the particular appliance needs. The HMI **26** works with a controller **40** and the oven module **20** to serve as the control center for the oven. The oven module **20** receives commands from the HMI **26** and the control unit **40** to perform the necessary functions to operate the oven (or other insert).

The Galley Power and Control Unit (GPAC) **42** controls the galley's power system and provides the necessary power sharing to operate the entire galley **10**. Because power is limited on an aircraft, the GPAC **42** is necessary to make sure the power is allocated to each power client in the priority that is supposed to occur. The Insert Power and Control ("IPAC") unit **40** controls the function of the components such as heating and cooling elements, coffee makers, trash compactors, and the like. Each insert can include a separate IPAC **40**, or the galley **10** may have a single IPAC **40** that controls all of the inserts. Similarly, the HMI **26** provides access control to the flight attendant and may be either a shared (smartbar) or individual component. A sample block diagram of the galley power and control system is provided in FIG. **6**.

From the block diagram of FIG. **6**, it can be seen that each galley bay receives power from the AC Distribution **50** and control from the GPAC **42**. Also, each bay **24** includes an HMI **26** and GAIN module **20,22**, which can be an oven, refrigerator, or the like. The number of IPACs can be tailored to the needs of the particular galley and aircraft, and thus there is no limitation on the number of IPACs **40** for each galley. The GPAC **42** can also control the lighting **52**, the galley communications bus **54**, as well as other functions of the galley, and receives its power from the AC distribution unit.

From the diagram, the GPAC **42** controls the galley system, and the IPAC **40** controls the function of the components such as the heating and cooling elements. The IPAC may be a common part of all GAIN types. The human machine interface **26** provides access control to the user and may also be a common part. When arranged in the foregoing way, the present invention provides a light weight, space efficient galley by reducing redundant walls, structure, and air gaps typi-

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cally found in convention galley architecture. Command and control are simplified and modularity provides for better configurability, where all of the individual components of the galley service module are arranged so as to operate as one system. Space is conserved because no wasted space is needed to accommodate the GAINs, as each bay is specifically designed for each designated GAIN.

It will be apparent from the foregoing that while particular forms of the invention have been illustrated and described, various modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, it is not intended that the invention be limited but rather all modifications and substitutions that would be recognized by one of ordinary skill in the art are intended to be included in the scope of the invention.

We claim:

1. An integrated aircraft galley structure comprising:
 - a bottom portion including a storage area for serving carts;
 - an upper portion including a second storage area; and
 - a service module between the upper portion and the bottom portion, the service module comprising:
 - a plurality of galley inserts;
 - a plurality of bays formed in the service module and sized to receive the plurality of galley inserts;
 - a plurality of galley insert modules for controlling each galley insert, the galley insert modules being received in the service module in designated slots;
 - an insert power and control unit for each galley insert for controlling power to said insert; and
 - a galley power and control unit for controlling each of the insert galley power and control units; and
 - a cooling panel behind the service module including a shield for limiting heat dissemination beyond the cooling panel.
2. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, wherein each bay associated with an oven includes venting formed in the bay.
3. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, wherein each bay associated with an oven includes thermally insulated walls.
4. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, wherein each bay associated with an oven includes a thermal seal at the galley insert module.
5. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, further comprising an AC distribution unit for distributing power to the insert power and control units.
6. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, wherein the galley insert modules are permanently fixed in an associated bay.
7. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, further comprising a heat exchanger in the galley insert module associated with the refrigeration unit.
8. The integrated aircraft galley structure of claim 1, further comprising a human machine interface for controlling all of the galley inserts.

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